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Senate

(Legislative day of Tuesday, May 17, 2022)

The Senate met at 10 a.m., on the expiration of the recess, and was called to order by the Honorable BEN RAY LUJÁN, a Senator from the State of New Mexico.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, our strong tower, continue to be our defender and guide. Lead our lawmakers in their work so that they will make Your priorities their priorities. Provide them with the patience, integrity, and compassion to become instruments of Your providence. Strengthen and protect them. Keep them safe from evil. Give them such courage and loyalty that they will passionately embrace Your precepts. Lord, infuse them with the spirit of wisdom, sympathy, and godliness as they grow in grace and in a deeper knowledge of Your providential love.

And, God, continue to sustain Ukraine.

We pray in Your powerful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 18, 2022.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BEN RAY LUJÁN, a Senator from the State of New Mexico, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. LUJÁN thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Barbara A. Leaf, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Near Eastern Affairs).

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

CRIME

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, Americans' concern about violent crime is the highest it has been in 6 years, and the statistics plainly show why that is. Between 2019 and 2020, the murder rate shot up by the largest 1-year increase in over a century, and the rate has kept on rising.

Nearly 60 percent more law enforcement officers were killed in 2021 compared to 2020. Cities all across America set alltime record highs for homicides last year. My hometown of Louisville, KY, was one of those cities. We also now average more than one carjacking every 48 hours.

Innocent citizens across America know this situation has literally spiraled out of control, but, unfortunately, the Biden administration and Senate Democrats continue to team up and find new ways to go soft on crime. The nomination and confirmation of Judge Jackson to the Supreme Court crowns a deliberate effort by Democrats to make the Federal judiciary literally softer on crime. They are specifically intentionally stuffing the Federal bench full of men and women whose starting perspective tilts toward sympathy for criminals rather than victims.

Even the New York Times had to admit this "concerted push by the Biden administration" to prefer nominees with "experience in criminal defense work" is "a sea change in the world of judicial nominations."

The Times continued:

The type of high-profile murder cases handled by some of Mr. Biden's nominees would have been considered disqualifying only a few years ago; now the president, who himself served briefly as a public defender early in his legal career, is actively seeking to name more jurists who have [that kind of] experience.

So, Mr. President, we are not arguing that public defenders ought to be excluded from the nomination process. Clearly, their work is important. Everyone deserves a lawyer, even the most heinous criminals. But the American people are not exactly clamoring for President Biden to dramatically tilt the entire judiciary toward the criminal-friendly perspective—least of all during this historic crime surge.

This week, with a long list of serious problems facing the country, the Democratic majority has decided to spend floor time on another judicial nominee with this one particular background, a second nominee who appeared during her committee hearing to be unfamiliar with a basic concept in trial law, and a third nominee whose

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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